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INFO RUEHXI/LABOR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 5837  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 5081  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 0329  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY 1531  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 9732  
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 1254  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0374  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 2985  
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 3509  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0509  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0278  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 1602  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0512  
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0747  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CARACAS 000124

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2021  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [SENV](#) [ELAB](#) [PHUM](#) [VE](#)  
SUBJECT: CARACAS WORLD SOCIAL FORUM IV/AMERICAS  
PREPARATIONS SHAKY

Classified By: Robert Downes, Political Counselor,  
for Reason 1.4(b).

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) The Fourth World Social Forum (Americas Region) will take place January 24-29 in Caracas. GOV organizers say more than 100,000 representatives of NGOs and social movements have registered for the event, which is billed as a mirror event to the Davos World Economic Forum. Like its sister regional events in Mali and Pakistan, the World Social Forum (WSF) Americas developed its conference themes via a series of civil society consultations and include "Imperial strategies and peoples' resistance," and "Power politics and struggles for social emancipation." The GOV-backed organizing committee has released scant details about the mega-conference and has not outlined a specific plan for transporting the 30,000 expected foreign participants, made especially difficult by the limited access to Caracas from the international airport caused by the closure of a key bridge. WSF organizers recently called upon Venezuelans to assist with providing housing and food for conference participants. Major events of the six-day conference include appearances by President Hugo Chavez and Brazilian President Ignacio Lula da Silva on January 27 and a Chavez keynote at the January 29 closing. Post expects the normal anti-U.S. talk from Chavez and wonders whether the GOV is really taking the logistical arrangements seriously for this signature event of the anti-globalization movement. End summary.

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WSF Agenda: Anti-Imperialism  
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¶2. (U) At the end of the 2005 World Social Forum V (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, organizers opted to hold three regional (or "poly-centric") fora in 2006. Venezuela will host the WSF VI/Americas January 24-29 in Caracas (the other fora are

in Bamako, Mali, and Karachi, Pakistan). The WSF began in Brazil as a developing world alternative to the prestigious World Economic Forum held annually in Davos, Switzerland. In keeping with the custom of the WSF, the conference agenda was developed via consultations with social movements and NGOs throughout 2005. The six "thematic axes" arrived at are:

-- 1) Power, politics and struggles for social emancipation. This will include "struggles against neoliberal capitalism in the Americas" and will ask, "are other types of socialism possible?"

-- 2) Imperial strategies and peoples' resistance. This includes the "'war of civilizations' as a new strategy for imperial expansion" and "militarization, criminalization of struggles and poverty, terror, terrorism, and the culture of fear." (Note: GOV organizers have announced that U.S. anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan plans to attend the WSF to address this theme.)

-- 3) Resources for and rights to life: alternatives to the predatory model of civilization. This will address "capitalism and threats to life (such as) global warming and 'natural' catastrophes, loss of biodiversity, and desertification." "Patterns of hegemonic knowledge and construction of anti-hegemonic knowledge" is another sub-theme.

-- 4) Diversities, identities and worldviews in movement. Studies indigenous issues, racism, Latin-American identities, and inter-religious dialogue, et. al.

-- 5) Work, exploitation and reproduction of life. This

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includes labor, unions, social organizations, migration as a form of exploitation, child labor, and human trafficking.

-- 6) Communication, culture and education: alternative and democratizing dynamics. Includes "right to information and communication in order to strengthen citizenship, resistance to the concentration of ownership of the media, socio-cultural movements as forms of peoples' resistance, and anti-hegemonic educational models."

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Schedule: 2,000 Self-Managed Activities  
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13. (U) Post has been unable to obtain a detailed schedule of events -- the schedule is not posted on the Internet -- but organizers have stated that more than 2,000 activities, including 200 cultural events, will take place during the forum. The forum will be inaugurated on January 24 with a "March Against War and Imperialism." Organizers said most of the events will be "self-organized," with various social groups reserving spaces for their particular events. Venezuelan organizers mentioned they were setting up 10 booths dedicated to various themes, including the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (run jointly by Venezuelan and Cuban delegations); the United States Poor; Palestine; the Bolivarian Congress of Peoples; and Mercosur. There will be other fora held under the auspices of the WSF as well, including the Fourth World Forum for Education. Forum sites include a camp established near the downtown Los Caobos Park (near the Botanical Gardens); specific meetings are also planned at various GOV offices and public universities. Some events will be held outside of Caracas, according to press reports.

14. (U) President Chavez is scheduled to appear at an event on the evening of January 27 sponsored by the Brazilian "Sin Tierra" landless movement. Chavez will also deliver the closing address on the evening of January 29, as he did during last year's WSF. Brazilian President Ignacio Lula da Silva is scheduled to appear at an event in the afternoon of

January 24 sponsored by the Brazilian Unified Central of Workers (CUT) and the Bolivarian Workers' Force (FBT). Official media have said the two presidents do not plan to have a formal meeting during the WSF.

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Logistics: Aye, There's The Rub  
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15. (U) Transportation to and from the airport has been significantly complicated by the recent closure of a key bridge connecting Caracas to Maiquetia International Airport.

Organizers announced the GOV had allocated some 1,250 buses to make the two-plus (sometimes five-) hour trek over the mountain. It is not clear, however, whether the GOV's mobilization plan can accommodate the 30,000 international visitors expected to attend the WSF. No senior GOV officials have addressed the strain that the added traffic might cause on the already swollen alternate routes to the airport.

16. (U) Early indications that "Parque del Este" ("East Park") in Caracas' upper-middle class district would be used as a tent city for participants were quickly denied by GOV officials. Conference organizer Julio Fermin said January 17 that WSF organizers were calling on Venezuelans to provide "solidarity housing" for conference participants in poor Caracas barrios. Fermin also said WSF officials had asked for 500 kiosks to be made available near Los Caobos Park for food vendors and artisans, some of which will use "social money," which apparently is a variation of bartering. In addition, Fermin said that the GOV's food markets, Mercal, will make foodstuffs available to participants.

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Comment  
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17. (C) The WSF's anti-imperialist theme is not surprising given the forum's genesis and history. The Chavistas can be expected to spin the event as the rest of the world starting to think like they do. We should expect some anti-U.S. histrionics from Chavez, though he tends to soften his tone with foreign audiences. The underlying question is whether Chavez will try to steal the show, literally, from the Brazilians by giving the WSF a Bolivarian imprimatur. The GOV doesn't appear to be trying too hard, however, as demonstrated by its amazing lack of planning to deal with the bridge problem. Arguably, WSF participants may not expect five-star treatment, but so far it looks like two stars is optimistic.

BROWNFIELD